

April 22, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to you concerning the sentencing of Mr. Bruce Smith, a man who assaulted and robbed me at the point of a gun some six months ago. I am informed that it is my right to issue a statement; I beg your indulgence as I speak publically to this personal matter.

I ask that you bring to bear the full weight of the law on Mr. Smith and sentence him to the maximum extent to which the law provides. I say this without a trace of vengeance in my heart. I am a God-loving Christian who believes emphatically in the power of forgiveness and the duty we all have to share it with those who express sincere remorse for their sins. As a Christian I have already forgiven Mr. Smith for his error, and feel a great personal sorrow for the misguided life he must have led to have driven that gun into my back on that beautiful October night. His is no life that I would envy.

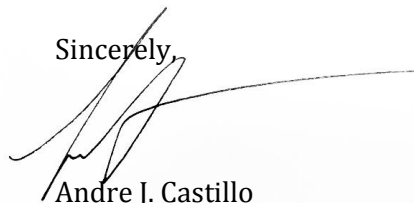
But forgiveness in the spiritual sense is an obligation separate from that to which we are all bound as members of a common civilized society. Mr. Smith it appears long ago to have renounced our very basic notion of civilization, and its demands of personal liberty and common decency for all. In excusing himself from these obligations he denied every victim he terrorized, and their loved ones who felt a sense of that terror, the sense of peace that civilization ought to bring – a peace which each of his victims had previously enjoyed. No one, myself included, can ever feel quite the same warmth that I experienced that lovely October night in the minutes before Mr. Smith forced himself upon me.

Mr. Smith is a professional criminal. His actions were coolly calculated to achieve maximum efficiency for increasing his personal wealth through criminal act, inciting just enough terror to produce the results he sought. Every action he undertook that night leads me to believe that he is not the type to be won over by acts of personal or civil charity; that the next day Mr. Smith returns to society a free man is the next day he will plot his next crime; that to him the trappings of civilization are mere opportunities for him to exploit at the expense of the wealth, liberty and security of those unfortunate enough to cross his path.

I hope and pray that this is not true. I will continue to ask the God I love to open this poor man's heart, who I am sure was at one point led astray and failed by those close to him. But I do not write to you as fellow members of a congregation where this call is better suited. I write to you instead as a fellow member of our union, our civil society, that must defend our civilization on behalf of our fellow law abiding neighbors, our friends, our fathers, our mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, from those who wish to prey upon them. Of which there are many.

Mr. Smith engaged in acts of predation on his fellow man, as a wolf does an animal. For that he deserves the fullest punishment that our judicial system can reasonably dispense so that our civil society may enjoy the liberty and security it has earned with minimal fear from his fang or shadow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre J. Castillo", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andre J. Castillo